

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

AID-05 TRSE-00 IO-13 /073 W

-----141055Z 066301 /20

R 140733Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1062

INFO DIA WASHDC

CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 7992

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, TH

SUBJ: INVESTIGATION INTO MARCH 26 COUP ATTEMPT

REF: BANGKOK 7153

1. AS OF APRIL 14 TWENTY PERSONS ARE DETAINED FOR POSSIBLE COMPLICITY OR FOR QUESTIONING IN THE ABORTIVE MARCH 26 COUP ATTEMPT. IN ADDITION TO THE PRINCIPAL COUP PLOTTERS (GEN CHALAT HIRANYARISIRI, THE THREE MAJORS AND ONE LTC), SIX CIVILIANS, FIVE POLICE OFFICERS AND FOUR FIELD GRADE ARMY OFFICERS ARE NOW IN DETENTION. TWO OTHER SUSPECTS ARE BEING SOUGHT FOR QUESTIONING. THEY ARE SOMPHOT PIYA-UI, EDITOR OF THE NOW CLOSED CHAO THAI NEWSPAPER; AND FORMER ARMY TRANSPORT DIRECTOR MG CHALOEM KHAMROPWONG, A CLOSE ASSOCIATE OF GEN CHALIT. ONE PERSON, AMON CHANTHARASOMBUN, IS OUT ON BAIL.

2. ON APRIL 12 THE MILITARY COURT ORDERED THE RELEASE OF DR AMON CHANTHARASONMBUN, DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE JURIDICAL COUNCIL, ON 300,000 BAHT (US DOLS 15,000).

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IN A SEPARATE ACTION THE COURT EXTENDED THE DETENTION OF GEN CHALAT, RASAK WATTHANAPHANIT, DG OF THE PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPT AND PHICHAI WATSANASONG, TELEVISION COMMENTATOR AND COLUMNIST FOR THE NOW CLOSED CHAO THAI NEWSPAPER. (NOTE: THE POLICE MUST REQUEST AN EXTENSION OF DETENTION EVERY TWELVE DAYS FOR EACH DETAINEE.)

3. THE APRIL 14 PRESS REPORTED THAT ARMY CINC GEN SOEM NA NAKHON DISMISSED FROM ACTIVE MILITARY DUTY THE FOUR ALLEGED CO-CONSPIRATORS IN THE ABORTIVE MARCH 26 COUP ATTEMPT. UNDER THE ORDER LTC SANAN KACHONPRASIT, MAJ BUNLOET KAEOPRASIT, MAJ WISIT THONGPRADIT AND MAJ ATSAWIN HINANYASIRI, WERE DISMISSED WITHOUT A PENSION.

4. COMMENT: DEFENSE MINISTER ADM SANGAT CHALOYU PUBLICLY STATED ON APRIL 1 THAT THE INQUIRY WOULD BE COMPLETED WITHIN TWO TO THREE WEEKS. AT THIS POINT IN TIME IT APPEARS THAT THE INVESTIGATION WILL BE VERY LIMITED IN SCOPE AND WILL NOT RPT NOT IMPLICATE HIGH-RANKING ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY OFFICERS, PROMINENT BUSINESSMEN OR FORMER POLITICIANS IN THE ATTEMPTED COUP.  
WHITEHOUSE

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
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